

**DRAFT**  
**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION**  
**MINUTES**

**Tuesday, February 10, 2015**

The Town of Bloomfield Economic Development Commission held a regular meeting on February 10, 2015 scheduled for 8:30 A.M. at the Town Hall in Bloomfield, Connecticut with the following members present:

Present:

Bonnie Bercowetz  
Michelle Bononi  
Jerry Katrichis  
Rich McDermott  
Harold Harper

Also Present: José Giner

Joan Gamble  
Philip Schenck  
Marc Needleman  
Rob Rowson  
Donald Poland  
Rich Hughes  
Dale Bertoldi  
Kathy Wolkner  
Joel Neuwirth

Vice-Chairman Bercowetz opened the meeting at 8:35 and called for a motion on the minutes of January 13, 2014.

**Minutes of January 13, 2014**

*Harold Harper moved to adopt the minutes of December, 2014 as offered. Michelle Bononi seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously.*

**Discussion Regarding planning strategies for the Wintonbury Mall:**

Rob Rowson stated that Mike Goman had been checking in weekly regarding the status of the property with respect to it being transferred.

Marc Needleman reported that there had been a stipulation agreed to by the parties for a strict foreclosure and that the lender would take clear title to the property within two weeks. LNR had been appointed as the servicing agent for the ultimate liquidation of the property. The Town Council would be discussing the Town's interests at their next meeting and are looking for input from the EDC.

Mr. Rowson stated that we need an owner that is committed to improvement of the property. He believed this was a unique "moment in time" that presented an opportunity to shape the Mall's future.

Town Manager Philip Schenck stated that the Council would be discussing this in Executive Session at their next meeting. He had received a report that one firm had recently signed a five year lease.

**Status Report on 470 Cottage Grove Road.**

Town Manager Philip Schenck stated that the Valco Building has been boarded up for years now. The Town Council had pursued the owners to get something going. There was a \$900,000 brownfields grant that can only be accessed if a tenant is found and committed to occupy.

Mr. Schenck stated that they had a tentative medical use interested in the property but they backed out. He said that the Town Council had extended its willingness to work with the owners given their good faith efforts. There was once some discussion about razing and liening the property to mitigate the blighted conditions. He estimated it would take between \$80-100,000 to demolish.

Mr. Schenck said that the owners had presented a timeline which indicates that they plan on demolishing the building by June of this year. They have replaced the plywood and will paint it as soon as the weather permits.

Bonnie Bercowetz asked about the existing three-family house on the site. Mr. Schenck said that it was not part of the plan for demolition.

Ms. Bercowetz asked if it would be possible to landscape the property. Mr. Schenck replied said that the only plan for now was to clear the land – the immediate objective is to get the blighted building torn down and the site cleaned up.

Michelle Bononi asked if the owners intend to preserve the historic house on the property. Mr. Schenck replied that it was the intent for now. It appeared that the house was in decent shape.

Ms. Bercowetz asked if there was any hint of a proposed tenant.

Mr. Schenck said that there was nothing specific in the works but it appears that the current owner wants to be cooperative.

#### **Staff and Commission Member Update on Various Topics of Interest**

Mr. Schenck stated that there was \$200,000 in the Capital Improvement Program to look at Bloomfield Center. He updated the EDC on the Town Green and Filley Park improvement projects currently underway. He stated that the Town was going to fund a study to look at traffic and pedestrian access issues in the target area around the center.

There was discussion regarding a possible roundabout at the Bloomfield Ave./Park Ave. intersection. Mr. Schenck stated that anything there needs State DOT input.

Ms. Bercowetz asked about changing the signal timing. Mr. Schenck said that would be part of the study.

Mr. Schenck stated that the Town was looking to do more events on the Green to help the businesses in the area. He said that we need to get together with business owners to come up with a coordinated parking management solution.

Mr. Rowson stated that discussions with the State could be protracted and solutions may not be achievable in the short term. He stressed that we need to favor the pedestrian in any solutions that we consider.

Don Poland stated that the apartment project was not likely to result in more than signalization improvements being required by the State.

Mr. Giner reported that he had talked with one of the principals in the center apartment project and that they were hoping to name their main investor sometime soon. The current plan was to have ground-breaking on the apartments by September.

Mr. Giner asked everyone to save the date for the planned CERC Economic Development workshop which is planned for Thursday, May 7, 2015 at 7-9 p.m. in the Town Council Chambers. He also stated that the TPZ had given its final approval for a new 150,000 s.f. building for Deringer-Ney at the corner of Woodland and Mucko Roads. They would be moving their current operations from 2 Douglas.

Rob Rowson reported that the next center merchants meeting will be on February 23<sup>rd</sup> at the TCBY shop. The merchants group has expanded beyond just the Wintonbury Mall to include anyone in the center area. He also stated that Kathy from his firm was working on a marketing piece for the Town. Goman + York has also been asked to analyze and report on some of the issues regarding the Town Library.

Mr. Schenck summarized the Tuttle and Wells study on the Library. The firm that did the study was no longer in existence. He stated that there was money available in the budget to review and update the T&W study. Mr. Schenck stated that there were three options that were being looked at. One of the big issues was what to do with the existing building if we chose to move the library.

Mr. Poland said that the option of building a new library on the Town hall property would be an opportunity to bring it to the front of the street and lead the way for other similar development.

Joan Gamble said that she would like to see the Board of Education move into the existing building.

#### **Adjournment**

***Harold Harper made a motion to adjourn at 9:30 a.m. The motion was seconded by Rich McDermott and approved unanimously.***

Respectfully submitted,  
José Giner